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Blunt, FEMA urge Missouri disaster victims to register

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. -- The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has established a disaster application telephone number for Missouri citizens or businesses impacted by the March 11-13 severe weather/tornado.

“Because damage assessments are continuing, I will be asking for additional counties to be added to the Federal Disaster Declaration. Any Missouri citizen or business that sustained March 11-13 storm related damages may call **1-800-621-3362 (1-800-621-FEMA) or 1-800-462-7585 (TTY)** between the hours of 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., seven days a week,” said Governor Matt Blunt.

Thomas Costello has been named the Federal Coordinating Officer for federal recovery operations in Missouri.

“Calling the 800 number is the critical first step of the recovery process,” Costello said. “People should not prejudge their potential eligibility. If they suffered damage, they should call.”

Citizens and businesses must call the 800 number or visit <http://www.fema.gov> to begin the disaster application process. Callers will be asked to give the location of the damages, types of damages, a daytime telephone number for FEMA inspectors to call, and insurance information. The callers will also be asked to provide a mailing address. Within a few days, citizens who call the 800 number will receive a Small Business Administration (SBA) loan application for a low interest loan, **which must be completed and returned before citizens can qualify for Federal Assistance.**

Although FEMA will set up a number of Disaster Recovery Centers in affected areas during the coming days, disaster victims who call the 800 number will not need to visit one to be registered.

Types of assistance available include:

SBA low interest disaster loans are available for renters, homeowners, businesses and non-profit organizations. Homeowners can borrow up to \$200,000 for real estate repairs. Renters and homeowners can borrow up to \$40,000 to replace personal property. Businesses can apply for loans to cover losses not covered by insurance, to repair or to replace damaged buildings, to help your business recover or mitigate against future disasters.

If you do not qualify for an SBA Loan you may qualify for an Individual & Household grant. The grants help with temporary housing assistance, home repairs and limited financial assistance to replace destroyed home or personal possessions.

FEMA manages federal response and recovery efforts following any national incident. FEMA also initiates mitigation activities, works with state and local emergency managers, and manages the National Flood Insurance Program. FEMA became part of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security on March 1, 2003.